



Horsing around: Gilbert Wendland works on hand-made models in a workshop at his home in Lark.

Wendland's collection includes miniature farm equipment and a circus calliope.

Neighbors aren't 'cold' here

By Lisa Sumter

Press-Gazette

LARK — When Judy Schmidt moved with her family three years ago to this Brown County community, it was more than just a lark.

Schmidt, her husband Gerry and their four children moved here from the Detroit area when Gerry took a job as principal of Zion Lutheran School in Wayside. They couldn't be happier.

Press-Gazette photos by John Roemer

People were "cold" in Detroit, the Green Bay native said. In Lark, neighbors they barely knew threw a surprise housewarming party for the Schmidts.

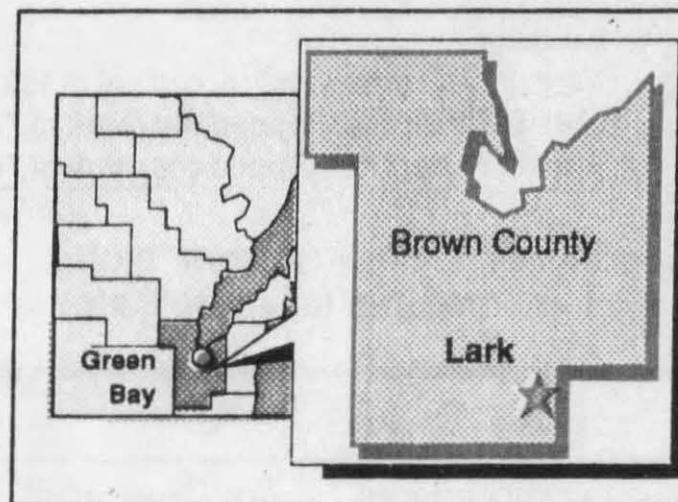
"I like not living in the city, yet it's close enough to other people in that if you need something, they're right there for you," she said.

Small businesses — a grocery store, a plumbing and heating contractor, and cabinet maker — are here. Most residents work 17 miles to the north in Green Bay.

Gilbert Wendland, 3771 Lark Road, is a natural source for Lark history — his godfather became Lark's first businessman when he opened a shoe store in 1884.

In those days Lark was a farm community. Milk brought to the cheese factory came mostly from local farmers, Wendland said.

Over the years, taverns, a livery stable, implement and hardware store and gas



The Lark profile

- **Population:** 75, residents estimate.
- **Keeping the faith:** Lark United Methodist Church has been at 7019 Dickinson Road since 1914. The congregation started in 1858.
- **Dear old dad:** Years ago, Gilbert Wendland was the father of two-thirds of the children in Lark. It wasn't as scandalous as it sounds. He was the father of four at a time when only six children were in the community.

station were in Lark, Wendland said.

Today, Wendland, who is retired, spends hours in his workshop making wagons and tiny leather harnesses for the model horses hitched to them. His handmade creations include a stagecoach, Victorian buggy, myriad farm equipment, even a circus calliope.

He displays and sells the models at farm toy shows.

"People who used to drive these horses on the farm, who are retired now, it brings back their memories," Wendland said.

Don't stop by at lunch to pick up a quart of milk and a loaf of bread at Wagner's Grocery Store, 6806 Dickinson Road. When most grocery stores are raking in noontime sales, Wagner's is giving its employees a break.

The store is owned by Franklin and Ruby Wagner and was passed down through the family since 1885.

Ruby Wagner said Lark years ago was

divided ethnically by Brown County — German on the west side and Irish on the east side.

Judy Roofers, 3759 Lark Road, is a cashier at Wagner's. Her husband works at Fort Howard Corp. in Green Bay and they have three children.

Students in Lark attend De Pere and Denmark schools. Some on the outskirts attend school in Wrightstown and Reedsville.

"It's just a nice community and everybody minds their own business and everybody gets along," Roofers said.

Roofers likes the country, but said some non-residents think Lark is at the end of the Earth.

"A lot of my kids' friends say it's a long, long way out," she said. "My daughter's boyfriend jokes that it takes three hours to get here from De Pere."

■ **Next week:** Roselawn in Shawano County



Stop and shop: Cashier Judy Roofers and Ruby Wagner, owner of Wagner's Grocery Store, talk about Lark and the community's history.



Happy as a lark: Judy Schmidt spends time with two of her children, Tim, 3, and Emily, 1, at their home in Lark in southern Brown County.